

A
S E R M O N
CONCERNING E 12. 30
Unity & Agreement.

PREACHED
AT CARFAX CHURCH
in OXFORD, August 9. 1646.

By IASPER MAINE, D.D. and one
of the Students of Christ-Church, OXON.

ROM. 12. 18.



*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,
live peaceably with all men.*



Printed in the Yeere,
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S E R M O N

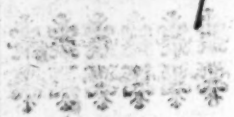
Unpublished

AT THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY

By a Sermon of the Rev. D.D. and one
of the Students of Christ Church, Oxford.

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A SERMON CONCERNING UNITY and AGREEMENT.

I COR. I. IC.

Now I beseech you Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speake the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgement.



Though Truth, from what mouth soever it bee spoken, or in what shape or dresse soever it appeare, be but one and the same; and where it is rightly understood, carries this uniting, peacefull quality with it, that it makes all its followers of one consent, and mind too; yet I know not from what mist, or impotence, lodged in our nature, with whom errors and mistakes do for the most part prevaile more then Arguments or Demonstrations; and with whom our owne mis-concepts (conveyed into us from such whom we think too holy to deceive us, or too learned to deceive themselves) do for the most part sticke so deeply, and take such root and impression in us, that it is not in the power of truth it selfe to remove them; This one, uniting, peacefull Bond of minds, this Ray of our Soules, according to the severall Teachers of it, and according to the severall formes and shapes, into which they have cast it, hath alwaies been looked on as so many severall Truths. And to the discredit, and disadvantage of it, hath in all Ages been as severally entertained and followed. Thus among the Heathen Philosophers, we finde the number of Sects, to be much greater then the number of Sciences. Every new famous Teacher, who professed severity in his looks, and austeritie in his manners, had the power to draw a cloud of Disciples after him, and to

rect a new Truth with a new School. And thus in the very Church of God it selfe, the Gospell no sooner began to be preached to the world, but it began to have its Sects and Schismes, and sidings too. The Apostles taught but one Faith, one Baptisme, one Christ, one plaine, open way of salvation to men; yet they were mis-understood by some, as if they had preached many: Or as if the numbers of their severall Doctrines, had equalled the number of their severall persons, and they had (every one where he went) scattered a severall Gospell.

To speake yet more plainly to you, and neerer home to the History of this Text; The *Corinthians* (to whom this Epistle was written) as if from every new Teacher that came thither, they had learned a new Religion, began at length to have as many Religions among them as they had heard Teachers. You might have distinguished divers Churches in the same City, and have divided their Beliefe and Creeds by their Families and streets. Where, by a fallacy and deceit of the eare, judging of the things taught, by their affection to the Teacher, and not judging of the Teacher by the things which he taught, every one chose to himselfe the name of his Minister to make a Side and faction by. One (as you read at the 12. Verse, of this Chapter) said, *I am of Paul*, another, *I am of Apollon*, a third, *I am of Cephas*, a fourth, *I am of Christ*: As if Christ had either been divided, or else were to stand with the rest as the name of a distinct Religion; Or at least, as if the Gospell (which at first sprung from him) like streams broken off from their spring-head, were no longer to retaine the name of the Fountain from whence it rose, but were to weare the stile of the severall pipes and channells, by which it was conveyed abroad into the world.

This diversity of names, and sides, grew at first from their diversity of opinions, and minds. When the unlearned wresting the Scripture which they had heard preached to an Apostles sense, would presume to impose that sense, which was indeed, not an Apostles, on others. And those others, equally as unlearned, thought it as reasonable, so they could entitle it to another Apostle, to impose their interpretation of Scripture on the first.

This diversity of minds, proceeded at length to diversity of language and speech. Congregation spoke censoriously of Congregation,

tion, as if none had been in the right, but they onely who most vehemently could charge others with being in the wrong. Saint *Paul* was urged, and quoted against Saint *Peter*, and *Apollos* against both, and *Christ* against all three. Whose Sermons, like those changeable figures which melancholly men frame to themselves in the clouds, were made to weare the shape and form, which every mans zeale and fancy suggested to him.

Hence, in time, from difference and disagreement in mindes and speech, they grew to difference and disagreement in society and conversation too. Difference of opinion bred separation of companies; and that which was at first but a neighbourly dispute, by degrees tooke flame, and grew to be mortall hatred, division and schisme. Men of the next doore were no longer neighbours to one another. All the bonds of Charity became utterly broken. All Christian intercourse, and familiarity and commerce ceast between them. He was thought to be false, and to betray his side, who offered to shew himselfe affable or civill to one of another party.

In short, the breach became so wide, that he was thought to be the onely religious man who could most enlarge the rent, and could bring most fuell to the present combustion which was thus unhappily kindled among them. To compose these differences therefore, (differences not unlike those of our miserable, distracted times) and to make the Knot and Reconciliation as fast and strong, as the disagreement and rent was large and wide, *S. Paul* here in this Text, prescribes a severall Cure, for every particular and severall breach. First, to remove the discord which rose among them, by calling themselves by severall names, and to banish the ill consequences of all such factious compellations, which for the most part are bitter Investives, and sharp arrowes of detraction hurld at one another, he perswades them to unity of language and speech, and exhorts them to call themselves all by the same name, in these words, *Now I beseech you Brethren, that ye all speak the same thing.* Next, to remove their want of meetings, and Communion together in the same place of Gods Worship, he perswades them to unity of Assemblies, and Congregation, in these words, *Now I beseech you, Brethren, that there be no divisions,* That is, (as I shall in the progress of this Sermon, make it clear to you from the Original) that there be no separations, that is, (as our English word doth wel expresse it) that there be no private

private sequestred meetings, no such things as Conventicles among you. Thirdly; to remove the root; and spring of all these uncharitable strifes, and divisions, and separations, he perswades them to unity of opinions and minds, in these words; *Now I beseech you, Brethren, that you be perfectly joynd together in the same mind, and in the same judgement.* Lastly; that he might with the greater successe do this, and (like a skilfull reconciler) might win upon all sides, he for a while layes aside the Authority of his Apostleship; and mingling Request and Conjuratiō, with Exhortation and Advice, he acts the part of an Apostle, in the forme of a Petitioner, in these words; *Now I beseech you Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* Upon these parts, the Apostles mild insinuation, and addresse of himselfe, and the severall Degrees of unity and concord, in speech, in Assemblies, and in Opinions, to which he here exhorts the Corinthians, I will build my future discourse. In the ordering of which, I will begin with the Apostles submissive insinuation; or addresse of himselfe, in these words; *Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1.
S Pauls qualifi-
cation.

For the clearer and more usefull handling of this part of the Text, First, it will be necessary that I speake something to you of Saint Pauls person, the Preacher here in the Text, and of his calling to the Ministry; which well considered, will conduce very much to the removall of a certaine dangerous error received of late into the minds of too many unlearned, vulgar men among us: Which is, That Universities, and Bookes, and Studies, and Learning are so faire from being necessary preparations to make a Preacher of the Gospel; that any Lay-man, though perhaps brought up to a manly, full Trade, or a vocation of Husbandry, or attendance upon Cattel, if he finde by himselfe that he is called by the Spirit of God, may put himselfe into Orders; and take the Ministry upon him. And thus enabled from above, without the forme of Ordination, or the assistance of any tedious, lazy helps, of sitting twenty years in a College to understand the Bible, may in the few minutes of a powerful Inspiration spring up an Apostle, and go forth a Preacher of the Word of God.

To this selfe was on they have been invited by two sorts of Examples in the Scriptures, one in the Old Testament, the other in the New. In the Old Testament, Doe you not read, say they, that
God

God called *Elisha* from the Plough to be a Prophet? And doth not *Amos* tell you in the 7th Chapter of his Prophecies, at the 14. Verse, that he was a Herdman, and a gatherer of Sycamore fruit? Then for examples in the New Testament, pray what were the Apostles? were they great Schollars? or did Christ send to *Athens* for them? were they not Fishermen, men altogether unletter'd, men called from mending nets to preach the Gospell? If this were so, That God according to his good pleasure, without any consideration of study, or height of parts, chose simple, unlearned, unstudied men, to be Prophets and Apostles, and Teachers, then why should any thinke he hath so confined, or entailed his free Spirit, or vocation of men, upon great parts, and studies, that he may not, if he please call the like unstudied, simple men from the Plough or Fisher-boat, or Stall, or Shop-board, to be Ministers of his Gospell, and Teachers of his people now?

My Brethren, you see I have not prevaricated, or diminished ought of the strength of the Argument which is urged in favour of Lay-mens preaching. In answer to which, laying aside all partiality to my selfe, and prejudice against them, I shall with the same spirit of meekness and Candour, with which *Saint Paul* here in this Text bespoke his Corinthians, beseech you, who heare me this day, to observe, and weigh, and consider well this which I shall say for a Reply.

First, Far, far be it from me, so to flatter the place of my Education, or so to bias my beleeve, by any false overvaluing of humane Industry, or great parts that I should pinion, as it were, or put limits to the power of the Almighty; Or should be so irreligiously bold, as to gain say that piece of his Gospell which compares his holy Spirit to the *wind*, which bloweth where it listeth. If they who thus pretend to a private Inspiration doe meane, that whatever God did in the times heretofore, he is able to doe now, I shall easily grant it. And here in the presence of you all, I will confess my selfe to be of their opinion. Nor shall I make any doubt or scruple at all, to say, that if we looke upon what God is able to doe, by the same power by which he was able to raise up Children to *Abraham* out of stones, or to speake yet more neerly to the Argument in hand, by the same power that hee was able to make a Herd-man a Prophet, or a Fisher-man an Apostle, he is able in our times also, if

if he please, to make the meanest Tradesman one of the greatest Luminaries of his Church. Since to an Omnipotent Agent, whose gifts are merely Arbitrary, and depend wholly upon the pleasure of his owne will, the greatest endowments of men, and the least, are alike easie. But though he be able to doe this, and in the ancient times of the Scripture have imparted his Gifts without respect of Persons, yet whether he now will, or whether in our times hee doth still thus extraordinarily raise up Teachers to himselfe, is extremely to be doubted. For here with all the Christian gentleness and reason, which may possibly conduce to the clearing of this doubt, were I to argue this Controversie with one of those men who invade our function, and from gathering of Sycamore fruit step up into the Pulpit, I would onely aske him this question; What Commission he hath thus to usurp upon our Office; Or who signed him his patent; Since the Apostle tells us in the fifth Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrewes, at the fourth Verse, (A place well worth your marking, my Brethren) That *no man taketh this honour of a Priest to himselfe, But he who is called of God, as was Aaron*? I know his common answer will bee, that God hath called him to this Office by the secret Instinct, and Motion of his Holy Spirit. But, then, he must not take it ill, if I yet farther aske him, by what signes, or markes, or testimonies, or tokens, he can either make it reasonably appeare to himselfe, or others, that God hath dealt with him as he dealt with some of the Prophets, or Apostles; called him from his Trade by such a motion of his Spirit? *Elisba* we know, made Iron swim, and knew mens Closet-discourses in a farre Countrey, which was a sure and certaine signe that God had called him to be a Prophet. The Apostles also we know, wrought many of Christs miracles, which was a most infallible signe that God had chosen them to be Apostles. If any of these men, who derive their warrant from the same sacred spring, can make Iron swim, or like *Elisba*, remaining here in their owne Israel, can tell us what the King of Syria saies in his Bed-chamber; Or if like Saint *Peter* they can cure fevers and diseases by their bare shadowes passing over them; Or if, like the rest of the Apostles, having never before knowne Letters, they can of a sudden speake all Languages, the Controversie is at an end; It would bee a very great sinne against the Spirit of God to deny, that hee is in them of a Truth.

But

But if all the proöfe and signe they can give us that they have him, be onely a strong perswasion of themselves; Nay, if by an infallible Illumination they could assure themselves, that they have him, yet as many as have not the like infallible Illumination to assure them so too, will not be guilty of an unpardonable offence, if they suspect they have him not. For here, I must once more repeat my former Question, and aske by what effects, or signes of the Spirit, men shall know them to be called? By what? will some man say, why? Doe you not heare them preach, expound Scripture, unfold Prophecies, interpret Parables, nay plucke the veile and cloud from the Booke of Mysteries it selfe, the very *Revelation*? Can any of you great Schollers, with all your study of Philosophers, Fathers, Councells, Schoole-men, Historians, Oratours, Poets, either hold your Congregations longer, or send them away more edified? And will you yet ask Questions? Or doubt of the certainty of their vocation? I must not dissemble with you, if I could meet with an unlearned Handicraft-man, who without study, can doe this to the same height, and measure of Truth, as those unjustly-cryed downe, learned, and well-studied men doe, I should begin to alter my opinion; And should reckon him as hee deserves, in the number of the inspired. But alas, my Brethren, as I am not come hither to disparage the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in what person soever I finde them, or to perswade that Scripture rightly expounded, is not one, and the same, from the mouth of a Priest, or an inspired Lay-man; so this I must freely say to you, That as many of those strange Teachers as I have heard, have expounded Scripture indeed, and have ventured upon some of the hardest places of the Prophets. But, then, if all my studies of the Bible, assisted with all those holy, uncorrupted learned helps, which might enable mee to understand it aright, have not deceived me, their expositions, and Sermons, how passionately delivered, or how long soever, are evident proofes to mee that they have not the Spirit. If they had, they would never, certainly, expound Scripture so directly contrary to his meaning; Or make the writings of the Prophets or Apostles, weare only that present shape, not which the holy Ghost hath imprinted and stampt upon them, but which tends to the division of a Kingdom, and the confusion of a Church;

Nor would they, as they do, what ever the Text be, presse that sense from it, not which is genuine, and naturall, but which tends most to the destruction of a party, or the fomentation of a most unnaturall Civill Warre. Saint Paul tells us in the fift Chapter of the Epistle to the *Galatians*, at the 22, and 23. Verses, that the fruits, or effects of the Spirit, are love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meeknesse, temperance. He useth to speake to men in the voice, and figure of a Dove: But to entitle him to all those forbidden workes of the flesh, of variance, hatred, sedition, heresies, envyings, murthers, and the like, there reckoned up in the precedent Verses of that Chapter, is to make him speake with the voice of a Raven.

In short, my Brethren, the Holy Ghost is not the Author of such Doctrines as breake Gods Commandements in the Pulpit. Nor is it a long Prayer, or a zealous two-houres reviling of the foot-steps of the Lords Anointed, their lawfull Sovereigne, which can make their Sermons to be any other then so much Libell, or holy Detraction; Or which can make their Interpretations of the Word of God, how moderate soever in other cases, if they be not agreeable to the scope, and minde, and intention of the Holy Ghost, to be any more then so many zealous mistakes, and so many illegitimate births, and creatures of their own deluded fancies.

Next, in pursuit of this seasonable Argument, give me leave, I pray, with all the plainenesse I can, (for I well know where I am, and to what Auditorie I speake) to make it yet farther evident to you, that if I should grant what these *Ἀσκήσαντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς ἄγγελοι*, as S. Basil calls them, these Saints of a daies growth, challenge to themselves, who thinke that all that is required to make a Minister of the Gospel, is *τὸ θέλειν*, onely to be willing, and to start up a Preacher. If, I say, it should be granted them, that they have the inward calling of the Spirit, yet God is so much the God of order, that unlesse they will enter themselves into his service, by undergoing those Rites of Consecration and Imposition of Hands, which God hath prescribed in his Church, to stand for ever as the outward formes and signes of their vocation too, every act of the Ministerie which they performe, is but a sacrifice like theirs who offered strange fire before the Lord, and miserably perisht by their owne forbidden Censors. Or if you will have me expresse the danger of it by a judgement

judgement as terrible. Thus to put their hand to the Arke, thus to support it, if 'twere ready to fall, is such an unwarranted piece of officiousnesse, as will (certainely) unrepented, at some time or other, draw the punishment of *Uzzah* upon them, provoke the abused Almighty to breake forth in a flame of fire upon them, and consume them for their unnecessarie diligence. For here, all the Scripture examples which imbolden them to this worke, do returne upon them, as so many instances and proofes of their in-croachment on our office. For here let me once more ask them, How was *Elisha* called to be a Prophet? meerly by the secret, unknown whisper and instinct of the holy Ghost? Truly, if he had, yet this would not make much for them; because God never tyed himself precisely to those outward formes in the choice of a Prophet, which he then did, and still doth in the choice of his Priests. Yet the calling of this Prophet was not without its visible signe. *God*, saies God to *Elias*, in the 19. Chap. of the first booke of *Kings*, at the 16. Verse, *Anoint Elisha the Son of Shaphat to be Prophet in thy roome*. And whether the like Ceremony of powring oyle on his head, were not also performed by some elder Prophet upon *Amos* as the younger, as 'tis not affirmed, so 'tis not denyed in Scripture, but left probable. In the Consecration of the Priests of those times, the case is much more evident: Read at your leisure the 29. Chapter of *Exodus*, there you shall finde, that before God would receive them into that sacred function, first, divers Sacrifices were to bee offered for them; then they were to be brought to the doore of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and there to bee washt; then the Priests Garments, the Coat, the Ephod, the Brest-plate, and Mitre, were to be put upon them. Lastly, followed the anointing oyle, which was powred upon their heads: And this was the Consecration of the Priests of those times.

The Ceremonies of Consecration in the New Testament, were different, I confesse, from those of the Old; but yet equivalent, and answerable to them in their kinde. These were, a publike meeting of the Church together, a presentation there made of the person to bee made a Priest; solemn prayers and supplications put up to God, to make him usefull to his Church: and for a seale of all the rest, the Imposition of the Bishops hands, assisted by his Presbyters. Now, my Brethren, apply this to the strange

Ephes. 5, 15.

Priests of our times, who with unwash't feet thrust themselves into the Tabernacle; not a sacrifice, not so much as a handfull of meale, or grain of Incense, or drop of oyl spent towards their Consecration; No Solemne assembly, no presentation of themselves made to God, no imposition of hands, not so much as a short Prayer, or benediction, or God speed you, used towards their setting forth into the Lords Vineyard, and you will find that these are the theeves and robbers (pardon the hardness of the language, I cannot make the Scripture speake mildlier then it doth) which our Saviour Christ speaks of in the 10. Chapter of *S. John* at the first Verse, *Men who enter not in by the doore into the sheep-fold, but climbe up some other way.* In brieft, men, whose Sermons and Doctrines correspond to their consecrations. By stealth they enter into the Ministry, and by stealth they exercise it. And whereas the mark and Character of all the true Ministers of the Gospel is to stand, *having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace,* these men wander, and goe about, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of strife. Men, who never think themselves sufficiently Apostles, till all the world doe call them the sons of thunder too. Men who speake fire, and throw lightning among the people; and thinke they have then onely done the worke, and businesse of an Apostle, when they have cast the Congregation which they leave behind them into a combustion and flame. I shall trouble your patience but with one Objection, which may possibly be made against what I have hitherto said; that is this: Here, some one of these moderne, selfe-inspiring Teachers may say, Sir, you tell us of Ceremonies and Consecrations, and I know not what, Imposition of hands; but either you have forgot your selfe, or wisely dissembled the vocation of the Apostles. Were not they without your formality of laying on of hands, without all this adoe of conveying orders, and the holy Ghost by fingers, immediately called by Christ? What imposition of hands went to change *S. Peter* from a Fisher-man into an Apostle? or what Bishops Ceremonies past to make *S. Paul* (in whose person you have all this while preach't against us) of a persecutor of the Church to become a Doctor of the Gentiles? Doth not your own *Tertullian* say, *Nonne & Laici Sacerdotes sumus.* That any Lay-man, if he please, may be a Priest? To this I reply; first, As for the Apostles, 'tis true, indeed, we doe

doe not read that they were consecrated to their Ministerie by such Rites and Imposition of hands, as were afterwards received and practised in the Church. Yet something answerable to the Imposition of hands went to their Consecration, before they were invested with full Authority to preach the Gospell to the world. For besides their first vocation by Christ to be his Disciples, from whom they learnt that Gospell which they afterwards preached, what saies the Scripture? *Tarry ye at Jerusalem*, sayes Christ to them, after his Resurrection, *till I send the promise of my Father upon you, and ye be indued with power from above.* And, pray, what was that promise, and what was this power? Certainly, that which you read of in the second Chapter of the *Acts*, where at the time prefixed by Christ, the Holy Ghost descended on them. And how did hee descend? in a still, soft, secret, invisible perswasion of the Fancy? Or in the silent whisper of an unperceived Illumination? No such matter, *Quod Episcopus aliis, Spiritus sanctus Apostolis*, saies a learned man. The holy Ghost here supplied the Office of a Bishop, descended upon them in an audible rushing wind, which signified his election of them to the eare; And fate upon their heads in the shape of cloven Tongues of fire; which signified his election of them to the eye. *Hic ritus, hac impositio*; These were his Ceremonies, this his Imposition of hands, sayes that Author. So that all the difference betwene the Admission of the Apostles to the Ministry, and others, was onely this: In other Consecrations the Bishop onely granted the power to preach, but bestowed not the Gifts; Here the Holy Ghost bestowed both. He first by visible, outward signes, testified to the world whom hee had chosen, and to whom they were to hearken; And then furnished them with Tongues, and Languages, and knowledge, and parts, fit to be the Guides and great Instructors of the world. Let these men make it appeare to me, that the Holy Ghost hath thus descended upon them, thus furnished them with parts, and I will most willingly resign my place to them in the Pulpit.

Next, as for *S. Paul*, 'tis cleare by the story of his Conversion, that he received not his Commission to preach from that which Christ spoke to him immediately from Heaven. But what saies the place? After he was fallen to the Earth blinde, *Arise*, saies Christ to him, *and go into the City, and there it shall be told thee what thou must*

Luk. 24. 49.

Acts 9. 6. &c.

must doe. When hee came into the City, a certaine Disciple named
Ananias, pre-instructed by Christ in a vision, was sent to him, who
Acts 9. 17. putting his hands on him, saies the Text, said to him, *Brother Saul,*
the Lord (even Jesus that appeared to thee in the way) hath sent me,
that thou mightst receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.
 Till his Imposition of hands, the holy Ghost was not bestowed
 upon him. And when he was bestowed upon him, yet he had not
 his full Commission; he was but yet a Disciple consecrated by a
 Disciple. To make him an out-right Apostle, a higher, second, and
 more solemne consecration past upon him, which you may read
 in the 13. Chapter of the *Acts*, where, sayes the Holy Ghost to the
 Prophets, and Teachers of the Church of Antioch, *Separate me*
Barnabas and Saul, for the worke whereunto I have called them, Ver. 2.
 And how were they separated I pray? The third Verse tells you,
When the Prophets and Teachers (there mentioned) had fasted, and
prayed, and laid their hands on them, saies the Text, *they sent them a-*
way, till then they wanted power. To which passage of this voca-
 tion, or calling to the Ministry, give me leave to adde this for his
 parts. That in a humane way of acquired Learning, hee was the
 greatest Scholler of his time, bred up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, a
 great Doctor of Law, spoke more Tongues, attained by his owne
 Industry, then all the other Apostles, which had almost all Langua-
 ges instilled into them by infusion. In short, he was versit, and read,
 and studied, not onely in the Scripture, but in the highest parts of
 secular learning; In the writings of *Menander*, *Epimenides*, and
Aratus, Heathen Poets. Which is sure signe to us, that studies,
 and learning, and parts acquired in Universties, are no hindrances,
 or impediments, if not helps to the Ministry. Lastly, as for that
 saying of *Tertullian*, that Lay-men may be Priests, hee tells you,
 in the following words, in what case this is to be understood. *Ubi*
Ecclesiastici ordinis non est confessus; Where the condition of the
 time and place is such, that Ecclesiasticall orders cannot be had;
 If a Christian Lay-man should come into a Pagan Island, or into a
 Countrey of Heathen people, where there is no true Minister, here
Tinguis, & offers, & sacerdos es, everie man is a Priest, and may
 baptize, and adminster the Sacrament, and preach as much of the
 Gospell as hee knowes. But where this necessity is not, to snatch
 the Sermon out of the mouth, or the Sacrament out of the hands
 or

or the child out of the armes of the true Minister, is certainly to be in the number of those uncalled Teachers, of whom God complaines in the 23. Chapter of *Jeremy*, at the 21. Verse, where he saies, *I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.* And farther then this I will not pursue the first thing I proposed to you; which was by occasion of Saint *Pauls* calling to be an Apostle, to remove an error of late taken into the minds of some, that crafts-men may exercise the place and function of a Priest.

- 1 The next thing I shall observe to you, is, the holy art and insinuation which S. *Paul* here useth to win upon the minds of his disagreeing *Corinthians*. Though he professes, in the beginning of the next Chapter, that he came not to them with that part of an Orator about him, which consists in the excellency of speech, or the enticing words of mans wisdom, (lest if he had done so, he might perhaps, have gained much glory to himselfe, but then his Matter must have been in danger to lose his, and so the Gospell have suffered from his Eloquence; and his Epistles might, perhaps, have past for a good piece of Rhetorick, but not for good Sermons) yet he every where carried this other, equally prevailing part of a good Oratour with him, that by complying with the affections of those to whom he wrote, he first transformed himselfe into their shapes, and became all things to all men, that he might the better transforme them into his, and make all men become like himselfe. Thus to the Jewes he became as a Jew; and put himselfe a while with them under the Law, that by insensible degrees hee might take their yoke from them, and might beget their liking, and entertainment of the Gospell. And thus to the Gentiles, who were without the Law, he became as a Gentile, without the Law too, that he might unite them to the Jewes. If I may speake of him, by his owne description of himselfe, (and certainly, in that description of himselfe, he was inspired to speake truth as well as in his other writings) as he was not chosen, like the rest of the Apostles, out of Fisher-men, or men unlearned, nor call'd to preach the Gospell from mending Nets; But as there was a concurrence of naturall, acquired, and infused abilities in him, which rendred him though not one of the twelve, yet of equall gifts and endowments to them all. Lastly, as his taske and patent to preach the Gospell was

The artificiall insinuation of himselfe.

was much larger then the rest, as much larger, as the rest of mankind was larger then the Nation of the Jewes; So in the performance of his taske, he never failed to expresse all this. Like the beast, of which *Pliny* speakes, which puts on the likenesse of every thing next it, and shoves like a flower before a flower, like a streame before a streame, and like a flame before a flame; so 'twas a piece of this Apostles (Art shall I say? or) holy commission, to be *all things to all men*. Strong with the strong, and weak with the weak. To part with his Liberty to the scrupulous, and to use it with the indifferent. To eat all things with those that did eat all things, and with those that did not, to keep himselfe to herbes. Will you heare him in all these particulars expresse himselfe? Turne to the ninth Chapt. of this Epistle, and to the nineteen Verse, where setting downe the end, and aime, which hee proposed to all his holy Arts, he saies, *Though I be free from all men*, that is, no way obliged to doe as I doe, but for my Masters service, yet have I made myselfe a servant to all, that I might win the more. Now if humility, and the casting of himselfe below himselfe; if to beseech, and entreat, and petition there, where he had sufficient authority and commission to enjoyne and command, be to wear the forme of a servant; and if all discreet behaviours, compliances, and applications, take their measure, and use, and praise, from the good end to which they are directed, and the good successe which they are likely to procure, in all his Epistles I finde not this Apostle more expediently making use of his Art in the forme of a suppliant, then in this Text. For consider these *Corinthians*, to whom he here applies himselfe, divided, and broken into Factions; and these Factions severally deriving themselves, some from him, others from *Cephas*, others from *Apollos*, (Names in their opinions, as holy, and great as his) and to have dealt imperiously with them, or to have used his Apostolicall power, and to have commanded them to agreement, had not been to make peace, but to animate, and inflame that party which called themselves his side. It had been too, to call up opposition, and disdain in the others, who were not of that side. Who citing *Apollos*, or Saint *Peter* against him, and thinking it to be some confession of their error and weakness to yeeld first, or to go over to them who said they were of *Paul*, it being as reasonable that they should come over to them, who

who said they were of *Cephas* or *Apollos*, might have askt the same question which the striving Israelite askt *Moses*, *Who made thee a Judge over us?* And might have seconded this question with another, and have askt him, how one interested, and ingaged, nay the head (as they conceived) of a Faction, could be presumed to be an impartiall reconciler? The better therefore, to establish a peace and concord among them, *S. Paul* in this Chap. proceeds by three conducible waies of Reconciliation. At the 13. Ver. hee clears himselfe from all interest and ingagement to a side; and equally blaming those who said they were of *Paul*, as those who said they were of *Cephas*, or *Apollos*; he asks them how it came to passe, that they dealt with the Gospell of Christ, which was entire and seamlesse, like his Coat, as the Souldiers did with his other Garments, divided it by a kinde of blind Lottery among them, and every one take his share? *Is Christ divided?* Saies he. *Was Paul crucified for you?* Or *were ye baptized in the name of Paul?* If you were not, why doe you raise a Sect, and Faction from him? VVhy doe you call your selves by way of marke and distinction, *Paulists?* And so turn the name of your Preacher and Apostle, into the name of a Schisme and side?

Next, as he well knew that the readiest way to reconcile all sides, was to manifest himselfe to be of none; so he well knew too, that he that would knit, and re-unite disagreeing mindes, was not to deale roughly, or magisterially with them, (for that were to lose both; and to turne the enmity and hatred which they held between themselves, upon the Reconciler, who strived to make them friends) but was to quench such discords with soft language, and to cure such rents and wounds of the Church by pouring oyle into them. Though, therefore, being armed with the authority of Christ himselfe, he might, with justice enough, have made Decrees and Ordinances to bind them to agreement, yet he rather chooseth to reconcile them to one another with their owne consents. In a mild, and humble addresse of himselfe; therefore, not entitling himselfe more to one side then anonher, he equally beseecheth them all, that he might the more regardfully be listned to by all. And he beseecheth them for things which little concerned himselfe, but for their owne good. He petitions them that they would be saved, and spends intreaties that they would vouchsafe to goe to heaven.

heaven. He requests them that they would not be worse Christians, that is, Schismatiques and Seperatists, then they were Heathens, that is, unanimous Idolaters.

Lastly, he begs of them that they would once more be a Church and City; that is, a place of communion, and society, and Christian conversation. And that hee might the more prevailingly obtaine this of them, he addresseth himselfe to them in a stile and compellation of the greatest and gentlest perswasion to peace that can bee used, and calls them *Brethren*. A word, which to remove all opinion of better or worse, or of inferiour or superiour, (the usuall grounds of discord) not only signifies an equality between the beseecher and the beseeched, and the beseeched among themselves; (For *Esse Fratres est relatio inter aequales*, sayes the Lawyer as well as the Logician; to be brethren, carries a reference of equality to one another) but it implies all the naturall and religious grounds for which men ought to maintaine League and Agreement, and Peace with one another. For in calling them *Brethren*, he called them men of the same sociable kinde, equally descended from the same common Originall and stock, and equally wearing in their nature one and the same common Image of God. And therefore, for this they were not to disagree, or quarrell with one another: Since likenesse of kinde maintains agreement between savage beasts and Tygers. *Leonum feritas inter se non dimicat, serpentum morsus non petunt serpentes*; Who ever heard of a Lyon devoured by a Lyon? Or who ever heard of a Serpent stung by a Serpent? much lesse should men then, bite and devour, and prey upon one another.

Againe, in calling them Brethren, besides the naturall affinity that was between them as men, he put them in minde of their spirituall alliance, as they were Christians too. That is, men allied to one another by one common Faith, one common Hope, one common Redemption, and therefore to meet in one common bond of Peace and Charity too. *Rixari, & se invicem convitiis lacerare Infidelium est*; 'Tis for Infidells, and men not converted to the Faith, to provoke, or brawle, or quarrell with one another.

Thirdly, lest all this sweetnesse of addresse and language should not prevaile, he joynes Conjunction to Petition, but vailes it in the stile and forme of a Petition too, and beseecheth them to unity by the name of his, and their Lord Jesus Christ. A name, by which

as he had before dispossest Devills, cured sicknesses, and restored the dead to life againe, so he requesteth that he may dispossest opinions, cure divisions, and restore agreement by it too. It being that name into which they were all baptized, and to which they had all past their promises, and vows. Lastly, a name by which they were all to be saved; and by which they, by whose names (to the blemish and disparagement of this) they called themselves, were, with them, equally to be called, that is, Christians.

Here then, 'twere much to be wisht, that the Preachers of our times would deale with their disagreeing flocks, as this Apostle dealt with his: That is, that they would imploy their holy, and religious arts and endeavours, by sweetnesse of language, and indifference of behaviour to all parties, to reconcile them. For since it may be truly said of Preachers, what was once said of Orators, that the people are the waters, and they the windes that move them; to be thus the windes to them, as to speak, and move, and blow them into waves and billowes, which shall roll, and strike, and dash, and breake themselves against each other; Or to be thus the windes to them, as to rob them of their calme, and to trouble the peacefull course, and streame of things well settled, and to raise a storme and tempest there, where they should compose and allay one, is not to act the part of an Apostle, or of a Preacher of the Gospell, but of an *Erynnis*, or Fury, who ascending from hell with a firebrand in her hand, and snakes on her head, scatters warres, and strifes, and hatreds, and murthers, and treasons, and betrayings of one another as she passeth. Every haire of her head hurld among the people becomes a sedition, and serpent; and every shaking of her Torch sets Villages, and Towns, and Cities and Kingdomes, and Empires in a Combustion.

Alas, my brethren, how many such furies, rather then Preachers, have for some yeares walkt among us? Men who speaking to the people in a whistle-winde, and breathing nothing but pitch-fields, and sieges, and slaughters of their Brethren, doe professe no Sermon to be a Sermon, which rends not the Rockes and the Mountaines before it: forgetting that God rather dwells in still, soft voices. 'Tis true indeed, the Holy Ghost once assumed the shape of cloven Tongues of fire: But that was not from thence to beget Incendiaries of the Church; Teachers whose Doctrine should

be cloven too; and which should tend onely to divide their Congregations.

If I should aske you, from whence have sprung our present distractions? Or, who are they who keep the wounds of our divided Kingdome bleeding? Are they not certaine tempestuous, uncharitable active men, who make it their work and businesse to rob men of the greatest temporal blessing of the Scripture, and to preach every man out of the shade of his owne Vine, and out of the fruit of his owne Fig-tree, and out of the water of his owne Cisterne? Are they not men who will stone you for your Vineyard, and then urge Scripture for it? And will take away your field, your possession, your daily bread from you, and then repay you with a piece of *Esay* or *Ezekiel*, or one of the Prophets, and call this melting, and reformation? Are they not men who doe onely professe to have the art not to heale, or close, or reconcile, but to inflame, and kindle sides? Men who blow a Trumpet in the Pulpit, and there breath nothing but thunder, and ruine, and desolation, and destruction, Whose followers call themselves *Brethren*, indeed, and boast much of their charity; But they call only such as are of their owne confederacy, *Brethren*: and make no other use of the word which was at first imposed by Christ, to bee the stile and marke of agreement and peace, then to bee the word and mark to know a faction by, and make no other use of their charity, which should extend it selfe to all men, even to their very enemies, but onely to keep themselves together in a separation and conspiracy.

Lastly, these are the men, who when they should strive to quench the present flame with their teares, do conjure as earnestly by the name of Christ to discord and confusion, as *S. Paul* here in this Text doth to order and agreement. Men who call it prophecy, and edification, and building up of the people, when they breake and divide them into Sects and Factions. As zealously exhorting them to speake divers things, as *S. Paul* here exhorts them to speake all the same. Which is the next thing to be considered; and the first step towards the reconciliation, and peace, here petitioned for, which is unity and agreement in compellations and names in these words, *Now I beseech you Brethren, that yee all speak the same thing.*

Whether the dispersion of men, after the building of the Tower of
of

of *Babell*, over the face of the whole earth, were a punishment or a blessing to mankind, I shall not in this Auditory examine or dispute. Only thus much we learne from the History of that place; that the occasion of that disperſion and ſeparation of men from one another, ſprung firſt from the confuſion which God threw among them, and that confuſion ſprung from their diverſity of ſpeech. For as ſpeech was at firſt beſtowed upon us by God, that wee might hold league and ſociety, and frienſhip with one another: ſo you may read in the 11. Chapter of *Geneſis*, that as long as all the world was of one language, and of one ſpeech, they lived unanimouſly together like men of one family and houſe. One heart, one ſoule ſeemed to move in them all. But when they once ceaſt to be *unius labii homines*, men of the ſame lip and ſpeech, when as many languages were throwne among them, as they afterwards poſſeſt Countreys, then ſociety, and co-habitation, and brotherhood ceaſt among them too. *They were ſcattered abroad upon the face of all the earth*, ſaies the Scripture. They who were before children of the ſame common Anceſtours, and derived themſelves from the ſame common parentage and ſtock, as if they had been borne in the adverſe Hemifpheres of the world, or had taken their beginning from as many ſeverall Parents, as they afterwards found Iſlands, of one great Family and Kindred, became ſo many divided Nations.

As this diverſity of Tongues at firſt broke the world into the ſeverall crumbles and portions of men, who from that time to this have divided it among them; ſo there is not any one thing which hath ſo fatally divided Kingdomes, and States, and Churches againſt themſelves, ſometimes to an utter extirpation, many times to an eternall breach, and Irreconciliation, as diverſity of Language. I doe not meane when men ſpeake divers tongues of ſeverall dialects, and ſignifications, (as when they at the building of *Babell* ſpoke ſome of them Hebrew perhaps, ſome of them Greek) but my meaning is, that nothing more directly tends to the diviſion of a State, or Church, then for ſeverall companies of men to diſtinguiſh, and divide and ſeparate themſelves from one another, by certaine words and names of marke and difference, eſpecially if they be words of diſgrace, and ſcandall, and reproach, mutually impoſed, and ſtuck upon each other; Or words of faction, and combination

combination, assumed and taken by themselves. Then, if hatred of person, or difference of Religion doe accompany such words of distinction, that for the most part befalls them; which befell the men of the old world, they breake society and Communion, and crumble asunder; and of one people become so many divided Nations, and Churches to each other. This is an Engine which the Devill and wicked Politicians have in all ages of the world made use of, to disturb the peace, and trouble the happiness of Kingdomes and Common-wealths. Making holy, vertuous words and names, many times the partition wall of separation; And the device, and incitement, not onely to divide Kingdomes but Corporations, and private Families against themselves. As long as the Jewes called themselves by one and the same common name of their Father *Jacob*, Israelites, they made but one State, one Common-wealth among them. But when once ten Tribes ingrossed that name to themselves, and the other two for distinction sake called themselves by the name of the Tribe of *Judah*, the most united, happiest, neerliest allied people in the world, a people of one blood, as well as one language, fell asunder, and divided themselves, like *Jacob* and *Esau*, into two hostile, irreconcilable, never more to bee united Kingdomes. And this was the cause of these disagreeing Corinthians, to whom *S. Paul* directed this Text. As long as they called themselves by one, and the same common name of Christians, they made but one City, one Church, one place of Concord. But when they once began to distinguish themselves by their severall Teachers, when some said, *We are of Paul*, others, *we are of Cephas*: A third sort, *we are of Apollos*; And onely a fourth sort, more Orthodox then the rest, *we are of Christ*; Then, then indeed, as if Christ had been divided, or had beene the Author of severall Religions, preach among them by severall Apostles, they became broken, and rent, and torne asunder, into severall Churches and Congregations. Where their usuall custome was, not onely to oppose Sermon against Sermon, and Gospell against Gospell; and Teacher against Teacher, but everie one in the defence of their owne Teacher, and his Gospell, thought it part of their Religion to extoll, and quote, and urge the purity and infallibility of the one, to the depression, and disgrace, and contempt of the other: Till at length it came to passe, (as I told you before) that that which be-

begun in Religion, proceeded to bad manners, and ill behaviour. Markes and words of distinction, and difference, grew to bitter invectives, and mutuall reproaches of one another. They who were the followers of Saint *Pauls* Doctrine, called those who followed *Apollos*, by way of marke and infamy, *Apolonists*. And they who were the followers of *Apollos*, by way of retaliation, and brand, called the followers of Saint *Paul*, *Paulists*, though Saint *Paul* and *Apollos* preach both the same Doctrine. Hard censures flew between them in as hard language; who ever was not of a party, nor enrolled of a side, was thought to be without the pale of the Church. The gates of heaven were shut against him, and nothing but reprobation, and the lot of the damned, and hell fire were allowed to be his portion.

Here then, my Brethren, let me make my appeal to every one of you, who heare me this day, hath not this been our verie case? I must with sorrow of heart confesse to you, that as often as I have for some yeares, made to my selfe a contemplative survey of this unhappie Kingdome, I have been able to discover no cause so pernicious for the many alienations of mind, or the many separations of Congregation from Congregation, heightened at length into the tragedy of an over-spreading Civill War, as certain vain, ridiculous, empty words, and names of distinction among us, which have sprung from some mens stricter or looser carriage of themselves in their profession of the same Religion. They of the more free, and open carriage and behaviour, who call a severe regularity and strictnesse of life, precisenesse, and an abridgement of Christian liberty, have called those of a more reserved, and lockt up, and demure conversation, Puritans, and Round-heads, and I know not what other names of contumely, and reproach. And they of the more strict behaviour, have equally as faulty, called those of a freer, and lesse composed conversation, Libertines, and Papists; the usuall words of infamy made to signifie a Cavalier. These two words my Brethren, have almost destroyed a flourishing Kingdome between them.

To this, I cannot but adde one most pernicious cause of our present divisions more, which people have derived to themselves from making themselves followers too much of severall Teachers; and affecting too much to bee called after their names: whilst one

saies,

saies, *I am of Paul*, another, *I am of Cephas*, a third, *I am of Apollos*, only a few neutrall men, *We are of Christ*. Nay, if we needs must goe severall waies, I could wish wee had such sacred names as *S. Paul*, or *S. Peter*, or *Apollos* to divide us. I know not whether it will be seasonable for me to speake it in this Assembly: But we for some late yeares have chösen to our selves names more moderne, and fallible to divide our selves by; whilst some have said, *We are of Calvin*, others, *We are of Arminius*, others, *We are of Socinus*. These, to the blemish, and reproach of Christian Religion, have been made names of strife and faction. Yet they have been great and learned names; though some of them, I must confesse, have been lyable to humane Errours. But if you consider the many rents and separations into which the ordinary sort of people have for some years divided themselves, either you will find no names at all for them, or names so unlearned, so obscure, so altogether mechanick, and unconsiderable, that it will be your wonder how such vulgar, rude, untaught Teachers should draw Disciples after them. It would pose me very much to tell you by any Monument of learning, or piety, which he hath left behind him to be knowne by, who was the Father, or first bringer up of the Sect of the Brownists; or who was the first Author of the Sect of the Anabaptists. I know there were Anabaptists in divers of the Fathers times; and I know too, that the Parent of that Sect then, though he were an Hereticke, yet hee was a Scholler. But as for the Author of the Sect of the Anabaptists of our times, I cannot well say what he was. One who hath written the History of their wilde proceedings at *Munster*, (where they begun with the Reformation of the Church of Jesus Christ, and proceeded at length to three wives a piece) saies, hee was a Dutch Botcher; one who repaired old Germents under a stall at *Leyden* in the Low-Countries; Another sayes, he was a Garmane Cobler; A third, that hee was a Westphalia Needle-maker; But another contröls that, and saies he was a Westphalia Baker. But whatever hee were, have not we in our times scene Patriarches and Prophets, as vulgar and mechanick, as unlearned and base as he? Men who have invaded the Pulpit. I will not say, from mending old breeches, or cobling old shooes, (pardon the homelinessse of the expression I beseech you, it is but the Historians Latine translated into my English) but from Trades

Trades so meane, so dis-ingenuous, so illiberall, that I should defile your cares, and the Pulpit to describe them: And yet have not these moderne shades of *Munizer*, *John of Leyden*, *Rotman*, *Knippenburge*, *Knipperdolling*, *Melchior Hoffman*, the great Enthusiasts, and disturbers of *Germany*, to the Astonishment of all Judging men, drawn Disciples after them, I wish I could only say, as meane, and base, and vulgar as themselves? Certainly, my brethren, consider the parallel well betweene the inspired Troublers of our Kingdome, and those, who by their wild Doctrines did set *Westphalia*, *Saxony*, *Munster*, and all the noblest parts of the Germane Empire in a flame, and you will finde, that in this sad Eclipse of Monarchy among us, there wants onely a *Sarcinator*, or botcher, to assume to himselfe the Crowne, and to be called by a *Sanedrim* or privy Councell of the like Trades, *Rex Justitia*, & *novæ Jerusalem Imperator*, King of Righteousnesse, and Emperour of the new Jerusalem, to make our case the very same with theirs.

Againe, in this diversitie of Guides and pastors, (Pastors scarce fit to be Overseers of unreasonable Flocks) do we not also hear a great a diversity of language spoken? The Lay-Preacher accuseth the University-man with want of the Spirit; and we of the University doe backe again account such Lay-men mad. Nay among us Schollars, they who pretend to *Calvins* Doctrine, doe banish all those out of the state of salvation, who deny absolute Predestination; Or hold not, that from all eternity without any respect of their workes or actions, whether they be good or bad, God hath past this sad, irrevocable sentence and decree, That some shall necessarily be saved, others shall as necessarily be damned. They who thinke this a piece of *Scisisme*, or a Doctrine brought into the world to drive People to despair, doe equally banish those from the state of salvation, who thus uncharitably banish others. But what speake I to you of this Congregation of such high schollarly dissentions? or discourse to you of disputes and controversies, not in the power of Scripture, Synods, or Generall Councells to decide? That which hath more troubled the peace of our distracted Kingdome, hath been a strife of words about things as small as *Communion*, or *Antis*: And about that part of the Kingdome of heaven, which lies not wrapped up in an unsearchable Decree, or an eternall sentence of Gods conserled Will, but in a grain of mustard seed: A little, sleight indifferent Ceremony, or piece of Church Discipline. One hath called it an Idolatry to make an obeyfance

in the Church; another hath call'd it a piece of Gods outward worship to doe so. One hath stiled the Crosse in Baptisme a signe of Superstition; another hath stiled it the marke, and badge, and embleme, of his Christianity and profession. One calls all Pictures in Church windowes, Idols; another looks on them as so much holy story, brought into Imagery and Colours. The very garments we weare have not escaped contradiction. One calls the Surplice a Romish vesture; another calls it a white robe of Innocence; and Decencie. Nay our very Prayers and Devotions have not been free from quarrels. Whilst some have called the Lords Prayer, A perfect forme, enjoyed by Christ to be said as it is; others most irreverently have called it a Taylors Measure, fit onely to cut out other Petitions by.

In this miserable diversity of sides, then, where Countrymen, and men of the same speech, doe so ordinarily speak divers languages, What way is there left to beget a peace and union among us? Truly, my brethren, I know none so fit as that which Saint Paul here prescribes in this Text; a way, which if it were well practised, or if men would either have more charity, or lesse gall in them, would in time beget an union and agreement between all Churches; that is, *first, that we lay aside all those odious, hateful names and words of reproach, which serve onely to provoke and engender strifes, and to beget a dislike of one mans conversation with another; that the honest, strict, regular, heedfull, conscientious man, be no longer called a Puritane, nor his wife a holy Sister; Nor the free, sociable, affable, open, harmlesly unscrupulous man, be any longer called a Papist, or Atheist, or by way of reproach, a Cavalier. I speak not now of the adukerous, swearing, riotous, lying, drinking, covetous man; these are such, that one of the wayes to reforme them, is to call them by their right names.*

Next, that we no longer, as our interests, or affections, or prejudices, or education, or customes sway us; pin our beleefe or faith upon any one Particular Guide or Teacher, so irremoveably, as without comparison or examination to reject and despise all others, I am of opinion we should quickly make one Church againe; if those new borne names and words of *Independence* and *Presbytery* did not

not divide us. And I am also Perswaded, that our severall Disciplines and Doctrines have not kept the Church of Rome at a greater distance with us, then the style and compellation of *Protestant and Papist*.

Thirdly, that we Schollars, in those high mysterious poynts which have equall argument and prooffe on both sides, and which both sides (for ought I know) may hold yet meet in heaven, doe factiously or peremptorily betake our selves to neither; But either lay them aside, as things of meere contemplation; not of practise or use; or else speak of them to the people, onely in that generall sense wherein all sides agree; and as that generall sense is laid downe to us in the Scripture.

Lastly, that in matters of Ceremony and forme, things either altogether indifferent, or at most, neither enjoyned, nor forbidden in the Scripture, that our carriage and words be always as indifferent: That we call not that scandalous which is decent; or that decent which is scandalous: That we presse not things as necessary, which are meerly ornamentall; nor impose ornaments as things of necessity. That where no well-establisht Law is broken by it, both in Actions and Language, where ever we come, we conforme our selves to the harmelesse (though to us unusuall) custome of the place: Herein imitating that sure example of *S. Paul*, by being *strong with the strong*, and *weak with the weak*, as neere as we can, to *become all things to all men*. In things meerly Ceremoniall, to part with our Christian liberty, and peaceably to yeeld to those, who, being otherwise perswaded, will contentiously refuse to part with theirs. And where our salvation, or the salvation of our neighbour is not concerned, charitably to comply, and sort with their infirmities; neither crossing them by our practice; though perhaps the better, nor perplexing them with our disputes, though perhaps the more rationall: But if it be possible, as much as lies in us, not only to have peace with all men in words and speech, but in society, and conversation, and Church Assemblies too: Which is the next degree of Unity here petitioned for, that is, an unity of meeting together in the same house of God, set downe in these words, *I beseech you Brethren; that there be no divisions among you.*

That I may the clearer proceed in the interpretation of this part of the Text, I shall desire you to observe, that the word which

4.
Assembly of Assemblies.

we here in English doe translate *Divisions*, is in the Originall Greek (by which we are to order our exposition) *χίσματα*: A word which signifies not every kinde of rent, or division, or disagreement among men; but such a division onely as is accompanied with a perverse, unreasonable deniall of society and communion together in the same Church. A division which carries with it an obstinate separation upon unnecessary grounds. Which unnecessary separation upon weak, slight grounds, is that which Saint *Paul* here in this Text, by way of difference and distinction from lighter Rehns, calls *χίσματα*, Schismes. A sin, my Brethren, of which if I should discourse to you at large, and should shew you the hainousness of it, by its dangerous effects; I might tell you that it is not only a sin against the sociable nature of men, who are borne for Communion and Commerce, and the mutuall help of one another; but it is a sin directly against that unity and peace, which Christ, as his last Legacy bequeath'd to his Church. A sin, which, (besides the uncharitable opinion which accompanies it, which is, that they who are separated from, must therefore be separated from, because they are wicked, deplorably wicked men, men reprobated, and utterly lost in the wayes of Errour, and with whom all communion is destructive to our Salvation) doth not alwaies confine it selfe within the retired, sequestred limits of a bare separation. But that which at first began from a scruple, hath many times proceeded to a Tragedy and massacre. They who at first causelessly separated themselves from their Brethren, because they were wicked, have many times, as their strength and numbers have encouraged them, and as the time hath favoured their Reformation (as they have called it) proceeded from the rectifying of mens Errors, to the lessening of their fortunes. And they only have at length been called the wicked, who have been rich, and have had estates to lose.

That onely which I shall further say to you of it; is this: Separation is a sin which hath alwaies veyl'd it selfe in the disguise of sanctity. Thus *Montanus*, and his followers broke off Communion with the whole Christian Church then in the world, because, forsooth, 'twas revealed to them by divine illumination, that the Holy Ghost was no where to be found but in their Conventicle. An Heresie, which beginning in Schisme proceeded at length to this monstrous conceit among them, That only the house of *Mon-*

IANUS was the true Church, and that *Montanus* himself was the Holy Ghost. Thus also the *Donatists* (an over-scrupulous Sect of men) divided themselves from the then Catholique Church; because it was not pure enough for such sanctified Communicants; nor complied with the inspired doctrines of the Father of that Sect. And this, it seems, was the fault of these *Corinthians* here in this Text; who having intitled themselves to severall Teachers, proceeded by degrees to divide themselves into severall Churches and Congregations: every one of which challenging to themselves the true and right Religion, and charging the others with the name of the false, thought at length that no way was left to keep themselves pure and unspotted, but by breaking off all Religious, nay Civill Commerce and Communion with each other. Hence, for feare of infection, it was held a crime for any but the Righteous, to assemble, or converse with any but the Righteous; or for any to meet together at a spirituall Exercise, but such who first agreed in the same purity of Opinions.

Here, then, if I may once more take the liberty to parallel one people with another; is not this our very case? Hath it not been the practice of many, many yeares, for those who call themselves the godly, the righteous, the children of the most High, to breake off society and communion, nay almost neighbourly civility, with those whom they call the wicked? As there were among the Jewes certaine uncleane places, and things, and persons, which whosoever toucht were for that time uncleane too; so, hath not the like opinion past among us, that there have been certaine unholy, unsanctified places, and persons, which make those who touch, or approach neer them unholy too? Have not some Pulpits been thought unsanctified, because, forsooth, the Preacher hath been ungifted? And wherein, I pray, hath his ungiftedness appeared? Because hee hath not expressed himself in that light, fluent, running, passionate, zealous stile, which should make him for that time seem religiously distracted, or beside himselfe? Or because his Prayer or Sermon hath been premeditated, and hath not flowne from him in such an *Ex-tempore* loose careere of devout emptinesse and nothings, as serve onely to entertaine the people, as Bubbles doe children, with a thin, unsolid, brittle, painted blast of wind and ayre? Or because, perhaps, the sands of his Glasse have not slected for
two

two tedious houres together with nothing but the bold insolent
defamation and reviling of his Prince?

Againe, have there not been some who have thought our Temples unholy, because the Common-Prayer Booke hath been read there? And have renounced the Congregation, where part of the Service hath been tuned through an Organ? Hath not a dumb Picture in the window driven some from the Church? And in exchange of the Oratories, have not some in the heat and zeale of their Separation, turned their Parlours, Chambers, and Dining-rooms into Temples, and Houses of Prayer? Nay, hath not Christ been worshipt in places yet more vile and mean? In places, which have reduced him the second time to a Stable? If I should aske the people of both Sexes, who are thus given to separation, and with whom a Repetition in a Chamber edifies more then a learned Sermon in the Church, upon what religious grounds, or motives either taken from the Word of God, (which is so much in their mouthes) or from reason, (which is so little in their practice) they thus affect to single and divide themselves from others: I believe it would pose them very much to give a satisfying Answer. Is it because the persons from whom they thus separate themselves, are irreligious, wicked men? Men who are Christians onely in forme, and whose conversation carries nothing but evill example and pollution with it? If I should grant this to be true, and should allow them to be out-right what they call themselves, The Elect, and Godly, and Holy ones of the earth; and other men to be outright what they call them, The Reprobate, the wicked, the ungodly and prophane, yet is not this warrant enough to divide or separate themselves from them. Nor are they competent Judges of this, but God only, who by the mouth of his Son, hath told us in the Parable, that the wheat and corne is not to be separated from the chaffe and tares when we lift, but that both are to grow together till the great harvest of the world. Till then 'tis a piece of the building of it, that there bee a commixture of good and bad.

Besides, let me put this Christian *Dilemma* to them: either the persons from whom they divide themselves are holy or unholy: If they be holy, they are not to separate themselves from them, because they are like themselves: If they be unholy, they are in charity to converse with them, that they may reforme and make them better.

better. Did not our Saviour Christ (and certainly his example is too great to be refused) usually converse with Publicans and sinners? Did he forsake the Table, because a Pharisee made the Feast? Or did he refuse a perfume, because a harlot powred it on his head? Or did he refuse to goe up into the Temple, because buyers and sellers were there, men who had turned it into a den of Theeves? Certainly my Brethren, we may, like Christ, keep company with Harlots, and Hypocrites, and Publicans and Sinners, and yet retain our innocence. 'Tis a weake excuse to say, I will never consort my selfe with a swearer, lest I learne to blaspheme: Or, I will utterly renounce all familiarity and acquaintance with such and such an Adulterer, or with such and such a Drunkard, lest I learne to commit Fornication from the one, or Intemperance from the other. In all such conversations, we are to imitate the Sun, who shines into the foulest puddles, and yet returns from thence with a pure untainted Ray. If mens vices then, and corruptions, bee not a sufficient cause to warrant a separation, what else can be? Is it the place of meeting; or Church, or the things done there, which hath made them shun our ordinary Congregations? Yes, say some, we have held it very unlawfull (as we conceive) to assemble in such a place, where we have seen Altars, and Windowes worshipped, superstitious garments worn; and have heard the more superstitious Common-Prayer Booke read; that great bolster to slothfull Ministers, and twin-brother to the Mass, and Liturgie of *Rome*.

Were this Charge true, (a very heavy one, I confess) had there been any among us so unreasonably stupid, as to spend their devotion on a pane of glasse, or pay worship to the dumb senseless creature of the Painter, or adore the Communion-Table, the wooden issue of the Axe and Carpenter, (as I think there were none) had there (I say) been very Idolaters among us, yet unlesse they would have compelled them to be Idolaters too, I (after all the imparciall Objections which my weake understanding can frame) can see no reason why they should not communicate with them in other things wherein they were no Idolaters. I am sure, if *S. Paul* had not kept company with Idolaters, we to this day (for ought I know) had remained Infidels.

My Brethren, deceive not your selves with a fallacy, which every child is able to discover. If such superstitions had been publicke

ly practised among us, it is not necessary that every one that is a spectator to anothers mans sin, should presently be an offender. Nor are all offences so like the Pestilence, that he that comes within the breath and ayre of them, must needs depart infected. Thou seest one, out of a blind zeale, pay reverence to a picture, he hath the more to answer for. But why dost thou, out of a zeale altogether as blind, thinke thy selfe so interested in his error, as to thinke thy self a partaker of his fault, unless thou excommunicate thy selfe from his conversation.

Againe, tell me thou, who callest Separation security; what seest thou in a Surplice, or hearest in the Common-Prayer Booke, which should make thee forbear the Congregation where these are retained? Is it the web, or matter, or colour, or fashion of the garment, or is it the frame or forme, or indevotion of the Book which offends thee? Or art thou troubled because they have both beene borrowed from the Church of *Rome*? That indeed is the great argument of exception; which under the stile of Popery, hath almost turned Religion it selfe out of the Church. But, then, it is so weake, so accidentall, so vulgar an Argument, an Argument so fit for none to urge but silly women, with whom the first impression of things alwaies takes strongliest, that I must say in reple to it, That by the same reason, that thou poore, tender-conscienc'd man, (who art not yet past milke, or the food of infants in the Church) makest such an innocent, decent vesture as Surplices, unlawfull; because Papists weare them, thou mayest make eating and drinking unlawfull, because Papists dine and sup. The subject is not high or noble enough to deserve a more serious confutation. That therefore, which I shall say by way of Repetition, is onely this: If to weare or do, whatever Papists weare or doe be unlawfull, as it will presently concerne us all to throw off our garments. and turne *Adamites*; so it will very neerely concern us too, to lay aside our Tables; and betake our selves to fasting, as the ready way to famine. Then to reject the Common-Prayer Book, because some of the Prayers in it resemble the Prayers in the Romish Liturgie, is as unreasonable, as if thou shouldst make piety and devotion in generall unlawfull, because Papists say their Prayers. And so, in opposition to whatever they do, shouldst think thou art to turne *Antichrist*, because what in that Church do confesse there is a God.

The time will not give me leave to say much in the defence of that excellent Book; Or, if I should, tis in any thing, I presume, which can fall from my imperfect mouth, which will be able to recover the use of it back again into this Church. Yet thus much, out of the just sense, and apprehension which I have of the wisdom, as well as piety, and devotion of it, I shall adventure to say. That I cannot think, that ever any Christian Church, since the time that that name first came into the world, had a publique forme of Gods Worship, more Primitively pure, more Religiously grave, and more agreeable in all points to the Scripture, then that is.

To which I shall only add this one praise of it more, that there is not any Ancient, Classically condemned Heresie, to be found in the Records of Councils, Church-Histories; or the Confutations of Fathers, which is not by some clause or other in that most Orthodox Book excluded.

Here, then, if there be any in this Assembly of that ill-perswaded mind, that he would not at this present make one of the Congregation, if the Common-prayers were read, let me once more ask him, what that great Antipathie between him, and that admirable Book is, which should make them quarrel one another out of the Church: Is it because it prescribes a Ring in marriage, or a Cross in Baptisme? over-scrupulous man! who would'st rather choose to make a rent and schisme, and division in the Church, then be spectatour to things so harmless, and indifferent. But thy weak Conscience is wounded. Weak, indeed, when a piece of marriage-Gold, or a little water sprinkled in the signe, and figure of a cross, the Type, and Emblem of thy Christianity, shall drive thee from the Church. I must confess to you freely, if such things, as the veneration of images, or adorations of Altars, or sacrifices for the dead, or the worshipping of the Hostie, or the Mass-book, with all the insignificant *Ave Maryes*, and superstitious prayers, which use to trauele round the Circle of a numerous set of Beads, had been establisht among us by publique Authority; And had been enforced upon the practice, and Consciences of men, and no Liberty of person, or freedome of estates allow'd them, unless they would conform to the present Golden Calf of superstition set up before them, a separation had not only been allowable, but necessary.

Dan. 3. 16.

We would have offended God very much to be partakers of such dross. And our best Answer would have been the Answer of the Three Children, when the King would have had them fall down to the huge image, and *Colossus* which he had set up, *O King, we are not carefull to observe thee in this matter.* But where no such things were enjoyned, where every one was left to the full use and exercise of his Christian liberty, where nothing was blameable among us, but the ridiculous, over-acted postures and gestures of some few busie, fantastick men, whose Popery lay in making discreet men laugh, to see them so artificially devout, and so affectedly ceremonious, to divide, and separate, or to give us over for a lost Church, because the Psalmes of *David*, after his own Musickall way, used to be sung to an Organ; As innocently, certainly, as if they had been tuned through his own loud Cymball, or had more softly been sung, and vowell'd to his Harpe: Or to renounce our solemn Assemblies, for such sleight; indifferent things, as a piece of holy story in a glass window, or because the Minister wears white, or because married people come together by a Ring, or because the Lords Prayer is more then once repeated, is not only Schisme, and I may safely say, Schisme upon scandall taken, not giuen, but tis directly contrary to *S Pauls* advice, here in this Text; who is so far from tolerating any such needless divisions, and separations of presences and bodies, that he will not allow in the same Church and Congregation the least dissent or division of minds; But makes it the least part of his Petition to his disagreeing *Corinthians*, that they would not only meet together in the same place of Gods Worship, but that they would be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, which is the last part of the Text. To which I shall only adde some brief Application of some things in this Sermon to you my hearers, and so commend you to God.

5.
Unity of minds

Twas well said of one of the Philosophers, (which saying of his hath since almost grown into a Proverb of truth). *Nihil est in Intellectu, quod non fuit prius in sensu*; That there is nothing in the understanding, or mind within, which was not first in the sense without. Tis as great, and measured a Truth, that there is nothing in our speech, or words, or actions without, which was not first in our mind, or wil, or affections within. For what our Saviour Christ said,

said, that *Out of the heart proceed evill thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false witness, blasphemies*, and the like; to every one of which sins without, belongs some secret, invisable spring within. As, I say, to every Adultery without, belongs some hidden lust within; and the uncleanness of the body is but the foul issue, and off-spring of the soul; And as to every murder without, belongs some secret envy, or hatred, or thirst of revenge within; and the rancour of the heart only clothes it self in the violence and blood-shed of the hand: so we may say of our Divisions, and Disagreements too. All those odious words, and names of mutuall infamy and reproach; all those perverse crossings, and thwartings, and contradictions of speech; all this duell, and skirmish, and quarrellsomeness of language; Lastly, all this shunning and lothing of one anothers company; all this separation, and denyall of communion, which we so ordinarily see exercised, and practiced without, are but so many unchristian behaviours, which take their originall and birth from as unchristian grudges, and prejudices, and jealousies, and mis-apprehensions within. Never man yet dissented from another in speech, but he first dissented from him in opinion: And never man yet separated from another in communion, but he first separated from him in affection and will. To remove, therefore, the root and spring of all disagreements, as well as the current and stream; and to beget a peace, and concord, and reconciliation without, Saint *Paul*, like a skillfull Artist, who reserves the hardest part for the last, proceeds from mens words and actions, to their opinions and thoughts: and like those who set Watches, and Clocks, where the Hand upon the Diall without, cannot move regularly, unless the weights and springs which guide it, move orderly within; the better to make us go all alike, and strike the same time, he endeavors to settle and compose those inward wheels, by which our words and behaviors without, are to be ruled and governed.

The thing then for which he here so earnestly Petitions, is Unity, and Agreement, and Consent of minds. Which, in plain terms, is to exhort us, that as we are all men of one and the same reasonable kind, formed and created like one another in the shape and figure of our body, so that we would approve our selves to be men of one and the same reasonable kinde, in the Musique and

Mat. 15. 19.

Harmony of our souls too. Which would then come to pass, if every one of us would by the impartial search, and examination of his own mind, dislodge those mists and clouds of error, which blind him towards himself, and benight him towards others. Or, if he cannot do this by the strength and diligence of his own naturall Forces, that he would have recourse to those who are most able to pluck this beam out of his eye; and whose work and business it is so to apply their Cures, as by proposing that one, constant, immutable, eternall, Divine Truth to his mind, in which tis possible for all minds well enlightened to concenter and agree, by degrees to reduce him from his blindness and error, and to make him not only speak, but conceive, and think the same things with him that taught him.

It was well said of him, who compared our minds to Looking-glasses, or Mirrours; For certainly if we could but keep them open, and unclouded, they carry this property of Mirrours with them, not only to return the images, and shapes, and truths of things, which pass before them as they are; but all minds in a clearer, or less clear degree, have a capacity to receive into them the truth of the same things alike. As a thousand Glasses, if they be true, successively look in, wil shew us the same faces: But then, as Glasses, if they be false, wil cast false resemblances; or if they be discoloured, wil transform all things which flow into them into their own die: So tis with us. I know not how it comes to pass, or whether I may ascribe the fault to Education, or Custome, or to our parents, or to our Affections, too much knit, and wedded to the Religion, or Doctrin, or Opinion, or Teacher, which most complies with our Fancies; but there are certain ill-cut, false-reporting minds, which look upon men, and things, in another size and figure then they are. Other minds there are stained and died (as it were) with certain weak prejudices, and corrupt opinions; through which, as through so many deceiving colours, they discern no truths which wear not that hue. As he that looks through a green Glas, takes all things for green; and he that looks through a blew Glas, takes all things for azure. And this was the very case of these *Corinthians* here in the Text. They first addicted themselves over-partially to severall Teachers; and from their severall Teachers, took in severall apprehensions, as they pleased to like or affect him above others, whose Disciples they

they called themselves. Some, though they did not well understand what they held, resolved (without any examination what they were) to be only of Saint *Pauls* opinions: Others resolved to hold only what had been taught them by *Apollos*: Others resolved to hold only what had been preacht by *S. Peter*. All which three taught and preacht one and the same Gospel; yet that Gospel was not alike entertained by all hearers. Whilst some disliked it in *S. Paul*, because (as himself complains) he was of an humble presence, and of an ungrateful utterance. Others dislike it, perhaps, in the mouth of *Apollos*, because it came Rhetorically from him, and he was guilty of that unedifying crime, forsooth, of being eloquent in the Pulpit. Others perhaps entertain'd it coldly from *S. Peter*, because he had not been bred up in the School of *Demosthenes*, nor tasted of the finer Arts and educations of *Greece*.

In short, one and the same saving Truth, for want of a little right judgment in the Hearers to compare it, coming from several mouths, pass into divers opinions first; and then these opinions broke forth into divers factions. And is not this, my Brethereu, our very case? Do but consider the present distempers of our poor, divided Kingdom; and, pray, what hath been the true root and spring of so much variance, and hatred, and heart-burning among us? what hath crumbled us asunder, and turn'd one of the purest, and most flourishing Churches of the world, into a heap of Heresies and confusion? Hath it not been the very word of God it self? In which all minds, I confess, should agree, and which should be the rule to compose all our strifes; and before whose decisions the greatest Scholars Disputes, and the meanest mans Doubts, should fall down, and mutually embrace, and kiss each other. How comes it then to pass, that Religion, which was ordained by God to be the oyl to cure our wounds, should prove only the oyl to feed, and nourish our combustions? Whence is it, that the Scripture, that Sword of the Spirit, should prove to us only *Ποικαία Νισου*, a two-edged sword, and that no other use should be made of it by us, but only to be the weapon of our Conflicts, by committing the edges, and making them enter duell, and combat with each other? Truly, my bretheren, all the reason that I can give you for this, is, That some (perhaps well minded people, but not of understandings either strong, or learned enough

2 Cor. 10. 10.

to reach the true sense and meaning of some places) have stept beyond their measure; and have presumed to interpret more then they have well understood. Others, of a more modest, but credulous composition, have thought that only to be the right meaning of the Word of God, which they have heard from the mouth of the Preacher which they most affect. Others, of a more dangerous policy, finding that the Scripture rightly expounded would extreemly make against the plot of their dark proceedings, and that the holy Ghost cannot be bribed to finde Texts to make covetousness, sedition, or the slaughter of their Brethren, or Rebellion against their Prince, lawfull; have, with some formall helps of piety, and zeal, put to their expositions, made the Scripture speak only those plausible untruthes, which most complied with their ends, and the peoples Fancy. Hence, the better to arrive to their Estates, by the distractions of their minds, they have dealt with them as cunning Anglers do with silly fishes, troubled the stream, and blinded them, and then made them their prey. The way to do this was to affront, and disgrace, clamour down all the primitive Truths for some Generations taught among them; and to recall from their sepulchres, and dust, all the old, intricate, long since buried Opinions, which were the madnesse of their own times, and the Civill Warre of ours. With which opinions they have dealt, as the Witch of *Endor* dealt with her Familiar, raised them up to the people clothed in a long mantle, and speaking to them in the shape and voyce of a Prophet. Hence come those severall acceptions, and interpretations among you, even in your ordinary discourses, of one and the same plaine, but sinisterly understood places of Scripture. One, following the practice of all the purest ages of the Church, thinkes the Sacrament of Baptisme is to be administered to Infants. Others, (who would certainly be a strange sight to the Congregation, if they should appear the second time at the Font) of late are taught to thinke that none are to be baptized, but such as are old enough to be their owne Godfathers; and can enter into Covenant with God, and promise for themselves. Some, because it hath beene called a binding of the spirit, to fetter their devotions in a set forme of Prayer, have banisht that Prayer, which Christ prescribed to his Apostles, out of their

their Closets, as well as Temples. Others, of as rectified a piety, think no Prayer so likely to finde acceptance with God, as that which was conceived, and put into forme by his Sonne. I should tire your patience too much to give you an exact Catalogue of all the rotten opinions which at this present swarm among us. One who hath computed the Heresies, which have sprung up in this Kingdome within these five years, sayes, they have doubled the number of those which were in Saint *Austins* time; and then they were very neer fourscore. One is a *Chiliast*, and holds the personall Reigne of Christ upon Earth. Another is a *Corporealist*, and holds the death of the Soul with the Body. Nay, as 'tis said in *Africke*, a Lyon will couple with a Tyger, from whence will spring a Libbard; so certain strange, unheard-of, double-sex't Heresies are sprung up among us: not able to understand what he would hold himselfe. You shall have an *Arrian* and *Sabellian* lodged together in the same person. Nay, (which is yet worse) whatever *Celsus* spoke in scorn, and *Origen* in vindication of our Redeemer, Christ and his Mother, hath of late trodden the Stage again, and appeared to disturbe the World. One (I tremble to speak it) hath called the Virgin *Maryes* chastity into question; And others have spoken of the Saviour of the World so suspiciously as if he had been a thing, of a stoll, unlawfull Birth. In short, there want only some of those *Munster* men among us, of whom *Sleydan* writes, where one calleth himselfe *God the Father*, another *God the Sonne*, A third *Paraclete*, or *God the holy Ghost*, to make our Babel and confusion of wilde opinions at the height. In this miserable distraction, then, where Heresie, and Error, hath almost eaten up the true Religion; And where all the light of the Gospel, which shines among us, is but like that imperfect light at the Creation, which shined before the Sunne was placed in the firmament; A light creeping forth of a dark Chaos and blind masse, and strifefull heape of jarring Elements: In this thick fogge of strange Doctrines, I say, which hath condensd it selfe into a cloud, which hath almost overspread this whole Kingdome, from which Truth seemes to have taken flight, and made way for Ignorance to stile it selfe once more the *Mother of devotion*, what way is there left to reconcile our minds, or to beget one right knowledge, and understanding of the wayes of God among us? Truly,

I know none but that which Saint *Paul* here prescribes in the Text; which is, that we endeavour as near as we can, to be of *one mind, and of one judgment.*

But how shall this be brought to pass, unless all judgments were alike clear, and unbiassed? Or, unless, laying apart all partiality, and affection to their own side, and all prejudice, and hatred against those from whom they differ, men would submit themselves to him, who is best able to instruct them; Or who can bring with him the most saving Truths into the Pulpit? Besides, (may some one say) if people should bring minds prepared to entertain the Truth, where is that instructor so infallible, or so opinionated of the strength of his own gifts and knowledge, that another pretending to the same Truth, may not challenge to himself the like infallibility? who shall be the Judge of Controversies? or who shall present Truth to us with such known marks and notes about it, that as soon as tis presented, every congregation (of what mean capacities soever) shall presently acknowledge, and entertain it? Will you, Sir, who have all this while thus bemoaningly pitied our divisions? we are bound to thank you for your charity to us; and should be desirous enough to imbrace a truth of your description. But you are a Scholar, whose parts and abilities lye in the humane modell, and building of your own secular studies. We are therefore bid to doubt very much, whether you have the Spirit; and are told by some who profess themselves inspired, that all your Readings, and Studyings, and tyings of your self over a difficult piece of Scripture, at midnight perhaps, when all others sleep, by a lone, solitary, dumb candle, are but so many labours in vain. Since tis impossible for any to understand the Scripture aright, but such only who have it revealed to them by the same holy Spirit that wrote it.

My Brethren, what shall I say to you? Modesty, and the knowledge I have of my own imperfections, wil not allow me to say peremptorily, that I have the Spirit of God. Or if I could distinguish his secret influences and assistances from the operations of my own soul, or could certainly say I have him, (which S. *Paul* himself durst not say definitively) yet twould not become me so to confine him to my frail, narrow parts, as to deny him to all others more learned than my self.

For

For the settling therefore, and composing of your divided minds, I will not take upon me to be the Judge of Controversies, but you your selves shall be. Onely the better to enable you to performe this charitable office to your selves, and for your better direction how not to be out in your judgement, as a sure clue to guide you through the perplext windings of that labyrinth into which some of you are falne, so falne; that they seem to me quite lost in a wood of mistakes, where every path is a guide, and every guide is an error, give me leave to commend to you that seasonable advice of Saint *John*, which he delivers in the fourth Chapter of his first Epistle, at the first verse, where (as if he had prophesied of our times) he sayes, *Beloved, beleeve not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false Prophets are come into the world.* In which words; you have two of the best Rules assigned you to go by, that can possibly be prescribed for the settlement of minds.

First, be not too credulous; Doe not presently beleeve every man that sayes he hath the Spirit; nor suffer your selves to be tolt and carried about with every wind of doctrine: For that is not the way to be all of one, but of as many severall minds as the art or cunning of severall Teachers shall please to work upon you. I am perswaded this easinesse of belief, this credulity, or (as the Apostle calls it) this admiration, this overvaluing of some mens persons, hath been one of the great parents of our present dissensions: whilst some weak, but yet well-minded people, building their judgement meerly upon the outward appearances of men, have mistaken the zeal and strict life of their Preacher for his sufficiency. And taking their Logicke from the precisenesse of his behaviour, have framed these charitable, but false conclusions to themselves: He is a man of a composed countenance, of a reserved speech, of a grave carriage, and of a devout elocution, therefore surely he is a holy man. And because he is a holy man, therefore whatever hee saies, shall be to us Oracle; as coming from the mouth of one, so much in the favour of God, that it is impossible he should deceive us, or speak that which is not right.

My Brethren, I have no designe or purpose to bring Holinesse into contempt; nor can I bee so injurious to piety or a good life, where ever I find it, as to expose it to the scorn of the licentious,

by not giving it its due. I am so farre also from lending encouragement to the lives of vicious Teachers, (Teachers who are the shame of their Mother, and the scandall of their Flock) that I could wish that every Congregation in England were furnished with such an exemplary Minister, that his life as well as preaching, might be Sermon to the people. Nay, give me leave, I beseech you, to extend my charity yet one degree farther. I am, so farre from disliking holinesse either in Preacher or people, that I wish we all made but one united Kingdome of Priests. Or, if you will have me expresse my selfe in the words of one of the holiest and meekest men of the earth, I could wish that *all the Lords People were Prophets*. But, then, you must give me leave to say too, That holinesse and strictnesse, and austeritie of life, are no infallible signes that the Preacher may not erre. Nor hath God so annex the understanding of his Word to the unstudied, unlearned piety, or sober carriage of the Expounder, that he that is most zealous shall still bee most in the right. As long as that saying of *S. Paul* remains upon record, That we hold this *treasure*, this knowledge of Gods Will, *in earthen vessels*; As long as the Preacher, how holy soever he be, is so much one of the people, as to dwell in a fraile, weak Tabernacle of clay; Lastly, as long as men are men, they will bee liable to mens infirmities. And as the learned scandalous Preacher may be sometimes in the right; so it is possible that the ignorant, zealous, holy Preacher may be often in the wrong. How to know this, and how to distinguish them, therefore, you are to make use of the next Rule prescribed to you by Saint *John*; that is, when you heare an Exposition, or a Sermon, or a new Doctrine preached to you, not rashly, without distinction or choice to consent to it, till you have past the impartiall sentence of a cleare judgement on it; compared and weighed Sermon with Sermon, and Preacher with Preacher; called every Doctrine, every Prooffe, every confident Assertion to the touch-stone, and measured it by some plaine evident place of Scripture; and examined whether the Holy Ghost, or his owne vaine, popular ambition, have for that time inspired the speaker; or whether his Sermon have had some dissembled, secular end, or Gods glory for its mark. And this Saint *John* calls, *trying of the spirits*; which is then done, when (as I said before) you reduce what you heare spoken by the Preacher to the infallible Rule

of

of Truth, the Word of God; and make that, well considered, the scales to weigh his Doctrine in. Does hee preach charity, and banish strife from his Pulpit? Does hee not *Barre Vice*, though he find it clothed in Purple, nor speak neglectfully of Vertue, though he finde it clothed in rags? Does he strive to plant the feare and love of God in his Auditory, the forgiveness of their enemies, and pity towards the poore? Dares he arraigne a publique sinne, though never so fortunate? or speak in defence of afflicted Innocence, though over-borne by oppression? Dares he maintaine his Christian courage in Tyrannicall, doubtfull times? And dares he call prosperous Sedition, but a more successfull mischief? Lastly, does he preach such Christian Truths for which some holy men have died, and to which he himselfe would not be afraid to fall a sacrifice? This, this man is to be hearkned to; this man is fit to be obeyed. And this man speaking the same things which God himselfe doth in the Scripture, (whatever his gifts of pleasing, or not pleasing sick, fastidious, delicate fancies be) is thus at least to be thought of, That though he speak not by the Spirit, (as a thing entailed upon him) yet, for that time, the Spirit speaks by him, which ought to be all one to you. On the contrary, does the Preachers Sanctity and Religion consist meerly in the devout composure of his looks and carriage? Does he strive to preach downe Learning, or does he call Study a humane folly? Does he choose his Text out of the Bible, and make the Sermon out of his Fancy? Does he reprove Adultery, but preach up discord? Is he passionate against Superstition, but milde and calme towards Sacriledge? Does he inveigh and raile at Popery, and at the same time imitate the worst of Papists, Jesuits, urge Texts for the Rebellion of Subjects against their Prince, and quote Scripture for the deposing, and Butchery of Kings? Does hee startle at a dumb picture in a Church-window, and at the same time preach all good order and right Discipline out of the Church? Does an Oath provoke his zeale, yet does he count lying in the godly no sin? Lastly, does hee preach separation upon weake untemper'd grounds? Or does labour to divide the minds, which hee should strive to reconcile? Let him bring what demurenesse or composure of countenance he please into the Pulpit; Let him, if he please, joyne sanctity of deportment to earnestnesse of zeale; Let him never so devoutly bewaile the cala-

of his Country, which he hath helpt to make miserable; Or let him weepe never so passionately over the Congregation, which he hath broken into factions; In short, how seemingly holy, how ~~plain~~, how unpropnaue soever his behaviour bee; though the Scripture doe so continually over-flow in his mouth, that hee will neither eat, nor drinke, nor speake, nor scarce sleep but in that phrase, yet as long as he thus forgets his Charity, thus Preaches strife, thus Division, I shall so farre mistrust whether he have the Spirit, that I shall not doubt to reckon him in the number of those false Prophets which S. Iohn sayes are gone out into the world.

The Conclusion then of this Sermon shall be this. Men and brethren, I have with all the sincerity and plainnesse which might benefit your soules, preacht Truth, and Concord, and mutuall Charity to you. I have also for some yeeres, not been so sleepey an Observer, but that I have perceived some of you (who have thought your selves more Religious then the rest) to be guilty of the (I might say Crime, but I will rather say of the) mis-guided Zeale of these *Corinthians* here in my Text. There have been certaine Divisions, and I know not what separations among you. I have farther observed, that certaine false, causlesse prejudices and aspersions have been raised upon our University, which to the grief of this famous Nursery of Gods Church at home, and the reproach of it abroad, are still kept waking against us by some of you, as if Conscience and Religion, as well as Learning and Gifts; had so far forsaken us, that all the Schools of the Prophets cannot afford you a set of able, vertuous men, fit to be the Lecturers to this soule-famishd Parish. How we should deserve to be thus mistaken by you, or why you should under-value those able Teachers which you have already; or refuse to take your supply from so many Colledges which here stand present and ready to afford you choyce: or why you should supplicate to the great Councell of this Kingdome, in pittie to your soules, to send you Godly Teachers, (which, perhaps, is but a well-meaning Petition from you, but certainly 'tis a great scandall, and Libell against us) I know not. But whatever the mysterious cause be, I am confident, that unlesse they will sleep over their infamy and reproach, it will alwayes be in the power of our despised University-Divines, to make it appeare

peare, even to those whom you intend to petition, That this is but a zealous error in you: And that they are as able to edifie you, certainly, as he, whose occupation it was to reparaire the old shooes of the Prophets. I should shame some of you too much, who were the Disciples of that Apostle, if I should describe him to you by a larger character.

Instead therefore of a farther vindication of the reproach throwne upon us, that which I shall say of more neere concernment to you, is this: If I have in the progresse of this Sermon, ript open any wounds among you, it hath not been with a purpose, to enlarge, or make them bleed, but to powre wine and Oyle into them, and to heale, and close them up.

Next, If I have cleared any of your sights, or inabled you at length to discern, that the reason why the mote in your brothers eye seemed so big, was, because an over-scrupulous zeale had placed a beame in your owne; and that in contributing to the ruine of one of the purest Religions in the world, the reason why you have swallowed so many monstrous Camels, hath been, because at first you made scruple, and strained at gnats, I have what I intended: Which was to let you see, that to divide and separate your selves from the communion of our Church, if it had been guilty of a mole or two, is as unreasonable, as if you should quarrell the Moon out of her Orb, or think her unworthy of the skies, because she wears a spot or two writ on a glorious ball of light.

Lastly, if I have said any thing in the reproof of discord, or the praise of charity, which may re-unite your minds, and make you all men of the same heart and belife, as well as of the same Citie and Corporation, I shall thinke I have done the work and businesse of a just Divider of the Word of God towards you, and of a faithfull Servant and Steward towards my heavenly Master. Whose blessing of peace be upon you all, together with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. To which glorious Trinity, be ascribed all Honor, Praise, Dominion and Power, for ever. A M E N.

F I N I S.